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SWITZERLAND AND THE AMERICAN FOOD SUPPLY

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THE ECONOMIC SITUATION

Nature seems to have predestined Switzerland to be a victim in a general European war.

Imagine a country smaller in size than Maryland and smaller in population than Massachusetts, surrounded on all sides by four great nations whose total population is about twice that of the United States. Imagine two of these surrounding nations at war with the two others. Imagine a country whose moist climate and high average altitude prevent it from raising more than a fifth of the cereal foodstuffs necessary for the consumption of its population, a population about equal in point of density to that of Connecticut. Imagine a highly industrialized country without any mineral resources nor any outlet to the sea. Imagine all these conflicting circumstances and you will have a true picture of the economic situation of Switzerland.

In the last few years before the war Switzerland was in the habit of importing from 50 to 75 per cent of her foreign wheat from Russia and Roumania; Canada, the United States, and Argentina supplying most of the rest. Coal, of which her soil is absolutely barren, she drew mostly from Germany. This empire alone supplied her with more than 80 per cent of her needs, less than 10 per cent being imported from France and still less from Belgium. As for pig iron, all of which we were obliged to import also, about 55 per cent of it came from Germany, 30 per cent from France and the rest from England, Austria, and Sweden. In normal times about three-fourths in value of our annual imports consisted of foodstuffs and raw materials and about three-fourths of the value of our annual exports were represented by manufactured articles.

In times of peace, the economic interdependence of nations is justly regarded as a very natural and mutually advantageous consequence of the international division of labor. But in times of war,

as we have learned at our expense, economic interdependence means economic dependence of the small on the large states, and nothing can be more threatening for the political independence of small states than economic dependence on their large neighbors.

Since 1914 Switzerland has become entirely dependent on the allies in general and on the United States in particular for many essential commodities, the most important of which is grain. On the other hand, Switzerland has become equally dependent on the central powers in general and on Germany in particular for equally essential commodities, the most important of which are coal, iron, chemical fertilizers and potatoes.

That the central powers should not supply us gratuitously with coal and iron is as natural, as it is natural that the allies should not allow us to pay for them with the foods stuff they export to us. Nor it is surprising that the central powers should forbid the reexportation to the allies of the coal and iron we receive from them.

On the other hand, the considerable tourist traffic, which formerly helped us to balance our foreign trade account, has become negligible as a result of the war. Consequently we today have to rely almost exclusively on the products of our grazing and manufacturing industries as payment for our imports of foodstuffs and raw materials.

The allies have further so far restricted our exports of Swiss raised cattle and dairy products to the central powers that they have become insignificant as compared with the needs and resources of those powers and insufficient to pay for our imports. Hence the recent credit arrangement between Switzerland and Germany, according to which we have been obliged to loan Germany \$4,000,000 for every 200,000 tons of coal we receive from her.

The allies have recognized that our economic relations with the central powers have been limited as far as is compatible with the necessities of our national existence. In order to live, we must import some cereal foodstuffs from the allies and export some products of our grazing industry to the central powers; that is the price exacted for the coal and iron which no one but they can furnish us. To deny us the right to import or to make it dependent upon our refusal to export would, therefore, be to deny us the right to live.

Stated in these simple terms, the problem involved is susceptible of but one solution at the hands of a nation and of a government which have always been noted for their spirit of fair play and for their generosity toward small countries.

THE POLITICAL SITUATION

So much for the economics of the Swiss situation. Let us now briefly examine its political aspect.

The Swiss nation, although one of the smallest in the world, is made up of peoples of different tongues, of different races, and of different creeds. About two-thirds of the population speak a Germanic dialect, about a quarter speak French and the rest Italian. I may here remark parenthetically that although German is the written language in the German parts of Switzerland, the spoken dialect, somewhat resembling the Alsatian, is so distinctive that it is not understood by the average German. The national problem arising out of the diversities of the Swiss nation has hitherto been successfully solved through the strict observance of three great principles—democracy, federalism (what you would call the principle of states' rights or of local autonomy) and neutrality.

Switzerland was born at the close of the thirteenth century as a democratic republic and, in spite of some attempts at political reaction, she has always remained true to her democratic ideal. The initiative and the referendum, which she has devised in the course of the last century and which have since been imitated in this country, are but the most recent symptoms of a political spirit which is as old as the country itself.

Until 1798 Switzerland had been a loose confederation of sovereign states. Then suddenly she became a highly centralized republic, after the French revolutionary pattern. Neither system proved satisfactory. In 1800 Napoleon Bonaparte urged Switzerland to adopt the American form of federal government. This was finally done in 1848. In the meantime several Swiss authors, and particularly James Fazy, a Geneva statesman who had been a warm friend of Lafayette, had carefully studied and strongly recommended the imitation of American institutions. The happy balancing of the rights of the constituent states represented in one house of Congress, and of the rights of the nation at large represented in the other, is, almost as much as the democracy itself, one of the secrets

of Switzerland's internal peace. We have not forgotten and we shall never forget that we owe it to the example of your country.

The third cardinal principle of Swiss political life is neutrality. This also is well-nigh as old as the country itself. It was practiced in an imperfect manner as far back as the beginning of the sixteenth century. It saved Switzerland from ruin during the Thirty Years' War in the seventeenth century and during the wars of Louis XIV in the early part of the eighteenth century. It was given its present form at the Congress at Paris in 1815 when France, Great Britain, Russia, Portugal, Prussia and Austria, recognizing "the neutrality and inviolability of Switzerland and her independence of all foreign influence to be in the true interests of the policy of the whole of Europe," solemnly vowed forever to respect them.

The neutrality of Switzerland is, unlike many other neutralities, no provisional and opportunist political attitude. It is a fundamental principle of our national life, a condition both of our external independence and of our internal peace. Our federal Constitution, defining the duties of the Federal Council, our national executive, makes it equally incumbent upon it to defend "the independence and the neutrality" of the country. At the beginning of the present war all our belligerent neighbors renewed the assurance of their fidelity to their treaty obligations and our government renewed the assurance of our absolute and unconditional will and duty to defend our neutrality against all possible aggressors. Since the beginning of August, 1914, our army has been continuously guarding our frontiers. The cost to date is approximately \$150,000,000, a sum which means as much to a population of 3,500,000 inhabitants as about \$4,500,000,000 would mean to the people of the United States. It is a very heavy burden. But we deem no exertion too strenuous, no privation too trying, no sacrifice too great, when the sanctity of our word of honor and the independence of our country are at stake. Such are the foundations of our political existence. They have thus far withstood all shocks from without and from within.

Ever since the beginning of the war the French and Italian speaking element of our population have ardently hoped and wished for the triumph of the allies. In those parts of the country where the German-Swiss dialect is spoken, our people were divided. An unbounded admiration for German efficiency, an exaggerated faith in the German version of the origins of the war, unfortunate illusions

about the degeneracy of France, about the imperialism of Great Britain and about the menace of Czarism caused many of our fellow-citizens to lose sight of the deeper moral significance of the present struggle. But today the violation of the Belgian neutrality and the admirable resistance of that noble people, the terroristic methods of German warfare and the magnificent reaction of unprepared and pacific France, the Russian revolution and the entrance of the United States into the war, have cleared the issues. Today the great mass of our people have, with regard to the principles at stake and to their champions on the fields of battle, such feelings of hope and gratitude as become the citizens of the oldest democratic republic in the world.

In her efforts to hold and to gain the sympathies of Switzerland, Germany has used two tools, one intellectual and the other economic. The first has failed her. A bad cause poorly defended; such is the Swiss opinion of the German propaganda. With the other tool Germany has been much more fortunate. In spite of our adverse feelings, or perhaps on account of them, she has been almost generous toward us. Burning exclusively German coal, the Swiss people suffered less from last winter's cold than the German people themselves. Last year three-fourths of our imported potatoes were furnished us by Germany. Our own crop had failed and this spring, when we were in dire need of potato seeds, Germany, in spite of her own shortage, supplied us liberally with them.

When rumors of the threatening American embargo on food for neutrals reached Europe, rumors which doubtless provoked still more rejoicing in Berlin than anxiety in Berne, it was intimated from certain quarters that if the allies failed us we might perhaps rely on Germany even for some of our cereal foodstuffs.

One may be assured that in her present moral isolation, there are few economic sacrifices which Germany would not make, if they were productive of real political advantages.

Fortunately the allies have also treated us fairly thus far. The allurements of interested German generosity have, therefore, not been too effective. But they are dangerous and they might become fatal for our people if we were not certain of your people's and of your government's sympathetic interest and support.

CONCLUSION

In his memorable farewell address, Washington said in 1795:

There can be no greater error than to expect or calculate upon real favors from nation to nation. 'Tis an illusion which experience must cure, which a just pride ought to discard.

This wise utterance is perhaps less absolutely true today than it was at the end of the eighteenth century. Still we should not dare to solicit any favors from this country, if we were not convinced that by granting them your government was effectively serving your own cause.

The United States government has it in its power to save Switzerland or to ruin her. For America to save Switzerland in the present crisis is to clear the way for the realization of the American peace idea, by convincing the most hardened of skeptics and cynics abroad of the absolute sincerity of its democratic inspiration. For America to let Switzerland perish or to allow her to be saved through the shrewd and calculating generosity of the German autocracy, would be to abandon the most ancient and the firmest foothold of liberal and federative democracy on the continent of Europe. Could anything more hopelessly obscure the fundamental issue of this war, undertaken by the United States to realize that state of political fellowship between peoples of different tongues and races, of which Switzerland is perhaps the most perfect prototype in the world?

And, on the other hand, could anything more gloriously and more persuasively show the German people the true intentions of the American government and the true obstacle to lasting peace, than a fair and generous treatment of that country which at their doors, is for friends and foes of democracy alike, the very embodiment of the democratic idea?

A public statement of this policy and of its justification from the American point of view, coming from this country and reëchoed into Germany through the thousand channels of our press, would be more than a convincing argument. It would be a demonstration. We know that America will save Switzerland, because we know that it is America's wish and will that the government of the people, by the people, and for the people perish not from any part of the earth, but that it prevail throughout all civilized mankind!

STATISTICAL APPENDIX

The following five tables illustrate Switzerland's economic dependence on the two hostile groups of belligerents for five of the most vital commodities. Unless otherwise specified, the figures given are in thousands of metrical tons. The total imports of each commodity as indicated often exceed the sums of the imports from the various countries, as only the most important of the exporting countries are mentioned.

IMPORTS OF COAL

<i>From</i>	1911	1912	1913	1914	1915	1916
Germany	2,467	2,615	2,845	2,730	3,032	2,730
Austria	9	11	7	12	2	13
France	393	322	325	202	12	9
Belgium	206	188	147	93	251	396
Holland	17	25	17	35	13	..
England	41	28	32	32	1	1
United States	..	6	6	..	..	..
Total	3,133	3,195	3,379	3,105	3,311	3,149

IMPORTS OF PIG IRON

<i>From</i>	1911	1912	1913	1914	1915	1916
Germany	656	785	707	553	997	637
Austria	9	12	7	45	129	6
France	348	392	364	242	5	20
Belgium	14	19	7	..	..	..
England	..	158	139	107	35	111
Sweden	8	8	5	6	121	92
United States	..	..	..	..	..	47
Total	1,165	1,374	1,229	953	1,287	913

IMPORTS OF POTATOES

<i>From</i>	1911	1912	1913	1914	1915	1916
Germany	48	48	68	21	22	59
France	10	19	8	4	4	..
Italy	8	11	14	43	..	6
Austria	9	3	2	1	..	..
Holland	1	..	..	60	3	11
Total	80	85	94	133	30	78

IMPORTS OF WHEAT

<i>From</i>	1911	1912	1913	1914	1915	1916
Russia	220	203	186	167	17	..
Roumania	102	141	50	11	..	..
Canada	46	55	80	60	..	..
Argentine	12	13	33	18	7	58
United States	24	33	151	168	458	540
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total	439	486	529	441	482	598

IMPORTS OF RAW COTTON

<i>From</i>	1911	1912	1913	1914	1915	1916
United States	14	15	16	9	17	16
Egypt	9	10	10	11	14	10
British India	1	1	1	1	1	1
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total	24	26	27	21	32	27

These five tables show that Switzerland could no more do without German coal, iron and potatoes—the same is true of several other commodities, notably the various kinds of drugs and fertilizers—than she could do without American wheat or cotton.

It will be noticed that in 1916, Switzerland actually imported more wheat than in the years before the war. In order to avoid any possible misinterpretation, it must here be repeated that ever since 1914 no wheat nor other grain has been exported from Switzerland to the central powers, except in the shape of strictly limited quantities of bread destined for the allied prisoners interned in Germany and for the Swiss citizens resident there. These exports, authorized, controlled, and encouraged by the allies, have never profited any of their enemies.

Unhappily for Switzerland, these excess imports of wheat in 1916 have been more than compensated by the deficiency of the imports of almost all other commodities and notably of almost all other foodstuffs as the following table shows:

<i>Commodities</i>	GENERAL IMPORTS		
	<i>Annual Average 1910-1913</i>	<i>Total 1916</i>	<i>From United States 1916</i>
Oats	180	96	49
Malt	54	19	12
Rye	19	1	1
Flour	45	4	..
Macaroni paste	23	..	..
Potatoes	95	78	..
Fresh vegetables	56	25	..
Beans and peas	8	4	..
Eggs	14	3	..
Butter	5	..	..
Poultry	5	2	..
Fresh meat	13	1	..
Preserved meat	3	1	1
Hay	51	1	..
Bran	13	4	4
Flour for cattle	53	..	..
Rupe cakes and carob bean	32	27	..
Petroleum	65	34	12
	<i>(in thousands of head)</i>		
Bovine cattle	86	3	..
Swine	65	37	..
Sheep	116	1	..

THE CASE FOR HOLLAND

BY A. G. A. VAN EELDE,

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On July 31, 1914, Holland began mobilizing its army and navy, subsequently set to increasing and equipping them, and now maintains on a war footing about half a million of men. It acted thus, not with a view to join the cause of either of the belligerents, but to be in a position to ward off any hostile attempt on the integrity of its territory, home and abroad. It publicly declared its firm determination to remain neutral.

The number of those criticizing this line of conduct was of no consequence in Holland, but rather extensive abroad. It was, the latter averred, inconsistent with the policy of Holland as chronicled in history and not conformable to the spirit of the nation, which